

464 Quincy St.
Brooklyn, N.Y.
Aug. 19, 1937

My dear Mrs. Allison,

Last night I saw your play. Harold Jackman had spoken to me of its power and competence some time ago. But he said of it seemed to me quite, quite bad.

When the curtains rang down on those last lines of Carrie, it rang down on the finest play, written by a negro I have yet seen.

I liked especially the sharp, pared dialogue, the unusual treatment of an unusual theme of Negro life, the swift, rare characterizations.

Of course it is not always true what a playwright must have a "chromed" character. And I may be wrong in selecting any of your character's attitudes as your attitude. Yet I couldn't help thinking that you as well as Carrie, damned trade for the black in our race. I couldn't help feeling that that last line was, part at least, of yours there.

any of Carriers for a general
Negro cry, if Negroes took
this cry of Carriers for the
cry within themselves.

I do not object to truth.
I object to certain attitudes
toward it.

Tell Carrie this: tell all
Carries this:

clear to suggest dark pigments of the skin.
 The tightness of the hair, the small jaw,
 Euche flowers holds its ruddy deep within
 and beauty blooms in pure darkness slept
 before.

before.
The black negative ~~meets~~ ^{is} wedded with the dance
the rhegisms spiraling up to ecstasy
and passion. wedded to strangeness.
There are ripes with flowers certainly.
Beneath the black of the saxophone,
The trumpet ~~music~~ ^{music} neutral and shrill,
Sings a bitter fortitude alone.

The music blossomed under jungle
stars re-echoed still,
Recalling night splendors we forget
when darkness looks on darkness
with regret.

Very sincerely yours,
Owen Dodson

I hope I am wrong in feeling this, but so many remarks point to that mark.

Find as the play is the theme, which is rather important in "The Trial of Dr. Beck", falls short of significance, of power, of love for a black race. I do not question the validity of Dr. Beck's and Carrie's characters, I object to your attitude towards their characters. The theme, as I see it, does not run horizontally with the high ideal you set for your play in the opening sequences.

Again I say: I hope I
am being altered by my
imagination and not by your
words.

It would be a pity to leave
any audience with so bitter,
so arid a theme, so hopeless
a situation, so false a
sentiment. It would be a pity
if America heard this